

Common Fractures

The surgeons at OSV treat fractures of the bones to all upper and lower limbs.

DEFINITION

Oxford Dictionary Definition – the cracking or breaking of a hard object or material.

A bone is fractured when there is a break in the continuity of the bone cortex. Similar terms used to describe a fracture include broken, crack, greenstick or buckle; all are used to refer to the same thing – a broken bone. The break is often described by its location (i.e. bone) and its direction (horizontal, oblique, transverse).

HOW IT HAPPENS

Fractures can happen in a variety of ways. Most fractures are due to trauma, with others due to pathological conditions or overuse. Trauma can vary from high-energy injuries such as motor vehicle accidents to low energy injuries such as simple falls.

TYPES OF FRACTURE

- Open or compound fracture – the skin overlying the fracture is also broken.
- Comminuted fracture – the bone is broken into multiple pieces.
- Avulsion fracture – a muscle or ligament pulls the bone away, fracturing it.
- Fracture Dislocation – when a fractured bone is associated with a dislocation of a joint.
- Pathological fracture – a fracture through bone weakened by an underlying condition – e.g. cancer, osteoporosis.
- Stress fracture – a fracture due to overuse repetitive stresses and strains.

INVESTIGATION AND TREATMENT

An X-Ray is the best investigation to start with when diagnosing a fracture. Other investigations, which may assist in obtaining the diagnosis, may include a CT scan and/or MRI.

TREATMENT PRINCIPLES

The human body heals fractures by forming a blood clot that calcifies, connecting the broken pieces of bone. For a good recovery, the bones must be held in the correct position and protected while healing occurs. This may be simply by a plaster, or if the fracture is displaced, surgery may be needed to put the bone back into the correct position for adequate healing to occur. Fractures that do not heal are called non-unions. Fractures that heal in the wrong position are called mal-unions. Non-unions and mal-unions may require further surgery to be corrected (see limb reconstruction).

COMMON FRACTURES MANAGED AT ORTHOSPORT VICTORIA

- Hand Fractures.
- Wrist Fractures.
- Forearm Fractures.
- Elbow Fractures.
- Humerus Fractures.
- Shoulder Fractures.
- Clavicle Fractures.
- Hip Fractures.
- Femur Fractures.
- Knee Fractures.
- Patella Fractures.
- Tibial Plateau Fractures.
- Tibia Fractures.
- Ankle Fractures.
- Foot Fractures.
- Pathological Fractures.
- Stress Fractures.
- Osteoporosis Fractures.

These notes have been prepared by orthopaedic surgeons at OrthoSport Victoria. They are general overviews and information aimed for use by their specific patients and reflects their views, opinions and recommendations. This does not constitute medical advice. The contents are provided for information and education purposes only and not for the purpose of rendering medical advice. Please seek the advice of your specific surgeon or other health care provider with any questions regarding medical conditions and treatment.